



News Release

Department of Veterans Affairs
North Texas Health Care System

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VETERAN ATHLETES WIN BIG AT WHEELCHAIR GAMES

DALLAS – The 26th National Veterans Wheelchair Games were held July 3 – 8 in Anchorage, Alaska, and VA North Texas Health Care System along with the Lone Star Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) sponsored 7 local veterans for the annual event.

Attracting more than 500 athletes each year, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games is the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world and caters to military service veterans who use wheelchairs due to spinal cord injuries, amputations, or certain neurological problems.

Department of Veterans Affairs and PVA are committed to improving the quality of life for veterans with disabilities and fostering better health through sports competition. While past Games have produced a number of national and world-class champions, the Games also provide opportunities for newly disabled veterans to gain sports skills and be exposed to other wheelchair athletes.

Events this year included swimming, table tennis, weightlifting, archery, air guns, basketball, softball, quad rugby, bowling, handcycling, wheelchair slalom, power soccer, a motorized wheelchair rally, as well as track and field events. Athletes competed in all events against others with similar athletic ability, competitive experience or age, and the Dallas Lone Stars brought home 16 medals.

VA North Texas HCS participants this year were Charles Allen of Cedar Hill, with a bronze medal in basketball; Jonathan Merchant of Mansfield, with three silver medals in track; Steven Ray of Rowlett, with a gold medal in bowling and a silver in weightlifting; Freddy Tamez of Red Oak, with a gold in bowling, silver in softball, and bronze in archery; Quentin Stephens of Garland, with 5 gold medals in track; Tricia Wilson-Sapp, of Rockwall, with a gold medal in air guns; and Anthony Mitchell of Dallas, with a silver medal in air guns.

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North Texas' own Charles Allen was also the recipient of the 2006 Spirit of the Games award. This very special award is given each year to one veteran who clearly demonstrates not only athletic competence, but also sportsmanship and strength of character. Visit www.wheelchairgames.org for additional information on the 2006 National Veterans Wheelchair Games. See the July 8 Special Edition of the Newsletter for more information on Mr. Allen and the Spirit of the Games Award - <http://www1.va.gov/vetevent/nvwg/2006V2/docs/SpecialEdition.pdf>

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